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THE GULL



Golden Gate Audubon Society

Berkeley, California

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MONO LAKE DANGER

Since 1940, every time residents of the City of Los Angeles have opened a tap, turned on the shower or flushed the toilet nearly one out of every five gallons of the water that they have used has come from the Mono Lake Basin, located 100 miles north of the city in the eastern Sierra Nevada.

The City of the Angels' thirst has drained scenic Mono Lake to the point where it contains half the water that it would hold had there been no diversions by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. And, if the climate remains the same, the continuing export of water from the area at previous rates will begin having "serious consequences" for the lake and its wildlife beginning in 1989 and will lead to the virtual demise of the lake's ecosystem by the year 2012.

That is the major conclusion of the study "The Future of Mono Lake" conducted by the University of California, Santa Barbara's Community and Organizational Research Institute for the California Department of Fish and Game. The \$250,000 study was commissioned by the state legislature because of the continuing controversy about the fate of Mono Lake and the popular recreational area that surrounds it.

Mono Lake is one of California's few large natural lakes. It is a closed, saline water body with unique chemical and biological characteristics. Even among salt lakes it is unusual. Its salty waters are filled with life in exceptional abundance. At their peak 200,000 brine shrimp crowd a cubic yard of lake water. Brine flies darken its shores for miles. The flies and shrimp serve as a convenient food source for the estimated million birds that visit the lake annually. It serves as a major staging area for phalaropes and grebes and a major breeding area for gulls. As many as 800,000 birds have been counted on its surface at one time. Its shoreline is dotted by ragged spires and columns made of a mineral called tufa. The lake's scenic attractions draw some 150,000 visitors annually.

Mono Lake has no outlet. Its size and salinity are determined by the balance between the water evaporating from its surface and the water flowing in to it from streams and springs. During wet years the lake level rises and its salinity decreases. During dry years the lake level drops and its waters become saltier.

(continued on page 98)

July 16 is the last date material for *The Gull* for September can be accepted.

FIELD TRIPS CALENDAR

Sunday, July 10—Chimney Rock, Pt. Reyes. (This trip is tentative. Call first.) Join us for our annual trip to see nesting Black Oystercatchers and Western Gulls. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the Pt. Reyes National Seashore Headquarters near Olema. We will caravan to the coast. Bring a lunch, liquids, and a scope if you have one. Leader: Betty Short (921-3020 weekdays). (✓)

Saturday, July 30—Point Reyes National Seashore. (This trip is tentative. Call first.) Meet at the Knave of Hearts Bakery at 8:00 a.m. in Inverness Park, Sir Francis Drake Blvd. We will concentrate on shorebird identification at Abbott's Lagoon and Limantour Estero. Bring a scope if you have one, lunch, liquids, and comfortable walking shoes. Leader: Lina Jane Prairie. (549-3187). (✓)

Saturday-Sunday, August 6-7—Yosemite Alpine Ecology Trip. Back by popular demand, this trip features not just the birds, but the wildflowers, geology and many other aspects of high mountain ecology. And as a bonus, George Peyton will provide a special wine-tasting.

Meet at 8:30 a.m. Saturday in the parking area in front of the Visitors' Center in Tuolumne Meadows. We will hike five to six miles with a substantial elevation gain, so everyone should be in good shape and used to hiking at high altitudes.

The Sunday meeting time and place will be announced on Saturday morning. Since the actual locations we will be hiking to may be changed up until

the last week before the trip (depending on drought and other conditions), we cannot be more specific. Our Sunday hike will terminate by mid-afternoon to enable participants to be back in the Bay Area at a reasonable hour. Make sure to bring comfortable hiking shoes, a day pack, and lunches and liquids for both days.

Campgrounds are available at Tuolumne Meadows and also outside of the Park on Tioga Pass road down to Lee Vining. Motels in Lee Vining include: Best Western Lakeview Motel (619/647-6543), Gateway Motel (619/647-6467), and Murphy's Motel (619/647-6316). Leader: George Peyton (415-444-31331—weekdays). \$(✓)

Saturday, August 20—Moss Landing. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Marina Parking lot. Go south on Hwy. 101 to Moss Landing. Turn right (just beyond the PG&E station) at the road to the Marina Science Lab. The parking lot is just before the one lane bridge. We will be looking for early migrating shorebirds and Elegant Terns. Bring snacks and beverages. This trip will end at noon. Leader: Don Starks (408/371-9720). (✓)

Thursday-Sunday, August 25-28—Backpacking trip to Lassen Volcanic National Park. We will backpack in three miles and spend three nights camped by a lake near a large meadow. We should see a mixed flock of warblers and other songbirds that summer in Lassen, resident birds of the mountains, and perhaps some migrating shorebirds. We will be in beautiful

country! Everyone will be responsible for his/her own gear and food, although some cooperative meals may be arranged. For details call David Rice (527-7210). This trip is limited to 12 people. Leaders: David Rice and Robin Pulich. \$(✓)

Carpooling arrangements will be attempted for trips marked (✓). Call Russ Wilson (524-2399).

Trips marked with \$ go to parks or other sites which require an entrance fee.

—FIELD TRIPS COMMITTEE

OBSERVATIONS

March 29 through May 31

Ah, Texas in April. I was just beginning to get used to lots of Scissor-tailed Flycatchers, Eastern Kingbirds, and Ovenbirds when I returned to the Bay Area. Now, looking at the data for the last two months, I find...Ovenbird, Eastern Kingbird, Scissortailed Flycatcher...and quite a bit closer to home. Those were certainly some of the exceptions for the very slow vagrant season which characterized May here in northern California. Many thanks to Joe Morlan for keeping track of the data while I was out of town. I hope ya'll will bear with me while I piece together the highlights of April and May.

News from The Farallones

High ocean productivity was nurtured by periods of northwest wind (accompanied by upwelling) and broken by days of calm. All species of seabirds, with the exception of Rhinoceros Auklet, were breeding actively, and stress (from egg predation, food fights, etc.) was conspicuously absent over the colony. These factors gave Island biologists hope for an exceptional season. (All SE Farallon information is courtesy of PRBO.)

Waterbirds

The last Northern Fulmar report was of one May 8 on a Monterey pelagic trip (SJ). A light-bodied *Pteradroma*, possibly a Mottled Petrel, flew north past SE Farallon May 20. Two **Murphy's Petrels** were recorded from a research vessel off the shelf of Half Moon Bay May 26 (DGA, RM, *fide* PRBO). A Flesh-footed Shearwater was found off Pillar Pt. April 2 (ToJ). One to several Short-tailed Shearwaters were seen on Whale Center pelagic trips off Pillar Pt. April 2 and April 9 (ToJ, MLE). The latest news of the **Red-footed Booby**, recovering at the Marin Wildlife Center since Oct. 16 from problems associated with a fish hook in its mouth, is that it has received new Gannet tail feathers to replace its old worn tail feathers. There are plans to release it soon (JM).

A Least Bittern, or maybe two (?), were discovered at Crespi Pond in Pacific Grove May 10 (CKf). White-faced Ibis were found wandering all over the place in May: in Sonoma Co. fifty south of Highway 37 in early May (RPH); in Marin Co. fifteen at Audubon Canyon Ranch, Cypress Grove May 16-22 (JK, *fide* RS), and two at Mendozo Pond May 26 (RS); in Solano Co. thirty-five at Grizzly Island Wildlife Management Area May 30 (CLO); in Alameda Co. thirty at the Hayward BART station May 22 (JWh); and in Santa Cruz Co. six at the Pajaro River mouth (PJM).

The **Emperor Goose** at Alameda South Shore was last reported April 17 (GLE, WG). One Eurasian Wigeon lingered to May 15 at Redwood Shores sewage ponds, San Mateo Co. (RSTh). The Harlequin Duck at Bolinas Lagoon was still there May 24 (DWm, PPh, JC), and the one at Rodeo Lagoon was last seen April 16 (EB, ToC, GHg). A

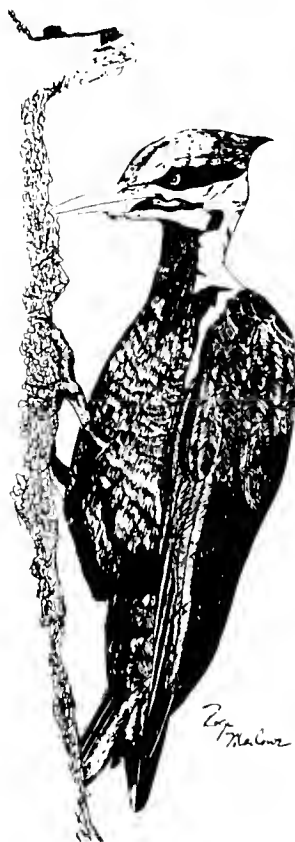
male Harlequin Duck arrived at SE Farallon May 20, and biologists expect it will summer there. The Princeton Harbor Oldsquaw was last seen April 9 (ToJ), one or two Oldsquaws were found from south of Mare Island to Benecia State Recreation Area April 19–24 (DAs, MBG), and another was at the Fish Docks, Pt. Reyes May 5–22 (WG, RS, JM, DDeS).

At least eleven Lesser Golden-Plover, many of them in breeding plumage, remained at Lawson's Landing to May 6 (RH_a). A Solitary Sandpiper was found along Sulphur Creek in San Antonio Valley April 9 (DS_n). The Rock Sandpiper at SE Farallon was last seen March 30. A female Ruff was at Alameda Creek mouth April 6 (NW).

A breeding adult Franklin's Gull was found at the Pajaro River mouth May 15 (PJM). The Little Gull at the Stockton Sewage ponds was in full breeding plumage when last seen April 18 (JMa). A Glaucous Gull was spotted from Pigeon Pt. April 24 (RST_h). An early Elegant Tern was found roosting with Caspian Terns near the jetty at Princeton Harbor April 23 (PJM). Other post-breeding Elegant Terns began arriving in mid-May: twenty-five were at the Pajaro River mouth May 15 (PJM), and one was there May 22 (ToJ); two were at Belmont Slough May 16 (PJM). An Arctic Tern, rare in spring, was found on a Monterey pelagic trip May 8 (SJ). A Black Tern was near Robert's Landing, Alameda Co. May 10 (RJ), and another on the same day was at Mountain View Forebay (PJM). Pelagic trips out of Monterey, Princeton Harbor and to The Farallones April 16–May 15 each found single Xantus' Murrelets (SJ, ToJ). A Horned Puffin was seen from a research vessel off of the shelf of Half Moon Bay May 26 (DGA, RM, *fide* PRBO).

Landbirds

A Short-eared Owl at SE Farallon April 16 was a first pre-June spring record for the Island. A Common Nighthawk was migrating over Vasco Road in Contra Costa Co. May 28 (RJR). Twelve Black Swifts were noted over Wildcat Regional Park May 28 (SMo), and a Chimney Swift buzzed the Fish Docks May 22 (JM, RS, DDeS, et al.). Two Vaux's Swifts were noted near the entrance to Stevens Creek Park May 1 (KT). A Costa's Hummingbird lingered about a San Francisco residence April 3–21 (MaY), and another was at a Castro Valley residence May 5 (PEG). Several pairs of Costa's Hummingbirds were also well documented along Del Puerto Canyon April 16–24 where they have nested in the past (ALE, SFB, JM, AD). An injured female Broad-tailed Hummingbird was found and taken into captivity



in San Jose April 15 (TAC, PG). Another female Broad-tailed Hummer was seen hanging out in the Carnegie Motorcycle Park, Kiln Canyon May 14 (DGY). These add to one other known interior record for this species.

A **Pileated Woodpecker** was along West Ridge Trail near the Archery Range in Redwood Regional Park April 2–3 (PH, JHH). On April 2 it was seen drilling a nest hole. A report of a similar bird in this area six months earlier was unconfirmed. This seems to be the first record of Pileated Woodpecker in the East Bay. A Tropical Kingbird which visited Lake Merced in March was re-found April 12 (DPM, RF). An Eastern Kingbird visited SE Farallon May 22, and another was found in the lupine north of Mendoza Ranch May 28 (RS, *fide* BHo). The Scissor-tailed Flycatcher mentioned in paragraph one was at the Oasis Ranch in Mono Co. May 17 (JWh)—a bit out of our area, but closer than Texas, right?

About forty Pinyon Jays in Del Puerto Canyon March 31–April 7 (HMR, ERC, JG) surprised observers. A single Pygmy Nuthatch was seen just north of the archery range in Redwood Regional Park April 7 (RJR). This is about one mile south of its 1986 nesting location.

There was a good wave of common migrants at Point Reyes May 20 (Western Tanagers, Black-headed Grosbeaks, and other western species, RS), but eastern and out-of-range vagrants were almost non-existent. Two male Tennessee Warblers reached SE Farallon May 8 and May 16. A Black-and-white Warbler was found at Middle Lake in Golden Gate Park May 20 (DPM), and an Ovenbird was banded at Palomarin May 17 (DDeS), and another spent May 21–23 at SE Farallon. A female Rose-breasted Grosbeak visited Lincoln Park in San Francisco May 21 (BMe), and one was

at SE Farallon May 28. Two Indigo Buntings showed up May 28: one in the lupine north of Mendoza Ranch, Pt. Reyes (RS, *fide* BHo), and the other southwest of Highway 1 and Willow Creek Road in Sonoma Co. (RoM).

An American Tree Sparrow spent May 11 at SE Farallon. A possible male Lark Bunting was near Sulphur Creek in San Antonio Valley April 16 (TJ). Two late lingering White-throated Sparrows were in a Mill Valley yard May 6–8 (KSW). A Harris' Sparrow visited a Pacifica feeder April 21–26 (CGR, GM). The last news of Lapland Longspurs this spring was of four at Spaletta Plateau April 1–5 (AG, EDG, RHa). A **Common Grackle** was seen in the trees and the fields at Mendoza Ranch May 21–22 (RS, et al.). A female "Baltimore" Oriole was found at the Fish Docks, Pt. Reyes May 24 (RS). Numerous Red Crossbills were spotted in Napa, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco and San Mateo Cos. through the period. The largest group was twenty-four at Corona Heights Park in San Francisco May 15 (GP).

Observers: David G. Ainley, Dick Ashford (DAs), Stephen F. Bailey, Evie Barlow, Eric R. Caine, Ted A. Chandik, Tom Condit (ToC), Joan Cotenin, Dave DeSante, Ann Dewart, Art L. Edwards, Michael L. Ezekiel, Robert Fox, Jim Gaines, Al Ghiorso, Wilma Ghiorso, Pat Gonzales, Philip E. Gordon, Edward D. Greaves, Marguerite B. Gross, John H. Harrison, Rob Hayden (RHa), R. Phil Henderson, Bob Hogan (BHo), Phil Hooe, George Hugenberg (GHg), Tony Jackson, Robert Jarrell, Tom Johnson (ToJ), John Kelly, Clay Kempf (CKf), George Ledec (GLe), John Mariani (JMa), Roger Marlowe (RoM), Bob Mendel (BMe), Peter J. Metropulos, Randy Moore, Joseph Morlan, Scott Morrical (SMo), Gloria

Mundt, Daniel P. Murphy, Charles L. O'Conner, George Page, Peter Philip (PPh), Point Reyes Bird Observatory (welcome back Peter Pyle), Harold M. Reeve, Cliff G. Richer, Richard J. Richmond, Shearwater Journeys, Dan Singer (DSn), Rich Stallcup, Ken Taylor, Ron S. Thorn (RSTh), Nils Warnock, Jack Whetstone, Katherine S. Wilson, David Wimpfheimer (DWm), May Yamamoto (MaY), David G. Yee.

Please report observations to Northern California Rare Bird Alert: 528-0288 or 524-5592.

—HELEN GREEN

Observations Editor

2001 Yolo Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707

CONSERVATION NOTES

MONO LAKE DANGER

(continued from page 93)

According to the report, these fluctuations can have important environmental consequences. If the salinity level becomes too high, it can have adverse effects on the plankton, brine shrimp and brine flies that live in the lake. Islands that serve as protected nesting areas for birds can either be inundated or joined to the shore. The area of shore lands subject to wind erosion increase and decrease. Alternating drops and rises in the lake level erode the picturesque tufa towers.

Before the City of Los Angeles began taking water from the streams that flow into Mono Lake, its surface level ranged between historic high and low elevations of approximately 6,428 and 6,404 feet above sea level. A reconstruction of the lake's level over the last 4,000 years indicates that it reached a high of 6,499 feet and a low of 6,368 feet over the period, the study finds.

Since 1940, however, the Los Angeles Department of Water and

Power (LADWP) has been diverting an average of 90,000 acre-feet annually from the streams that flow into Mono Lake. This water has provided approximately 17 percent of the city's water supply. As a result, the surface of Mono Lake has fallen 45 feet—from an elevation of 6,417 feet in 1940 to an "historic low stand" of 6,372 feet in late 1981 and early 1982. During this period the lake's volume decreased from about 4.5 million to about 2.2 million acre-feet and the lake's salinity has doubled. Since then abnormally wet weather has resulted in a minor rise in lake level. Without LADWP's diversions, the lake would stand 52 feet higher than its current level, the report concludes.

"Management of Mono Lake must take into account natural fluctuations in lake level in response to variations in climate. Sound management rests not only on the identification of lake levels at which critical changes occur, but also on the idea of a buffer level. A buffer level is the level at which the lake must be maintained during normal climatic years in order to keep the lake from falling to a critical elevation during times of drought," the report states.

It goes on to identify three critical levels: 6,382, 6,372 and 6,362 feet above sea level.

Level I (6,382 feet) protects all key aspects of the lake and its designated national recreation area.

The lake has already fallen below this level. To sustain the lake at such a level, LADWP must reduce the amount of water it imports from the basin by about 42 percent.

Level II (6,372 feet), sacrifices substantial portions of gull habitat, endangers significant numbers of tufa towers, threatens much existing wetland with drainage and adversely affects the

breeding biology of plovers, but maintains production of brine shrimp and brine flies in the lake.

Assuming historic climate and rates of diversion, this level will be reached by 1991. To sustain the lake at such a level, LADWP must reduce the amount of water it imports from the basin by about 39 percent.

Level III (6,362 feet) is dangerous for the lake ecosystem. At this level, the lake would become unreliable as a staging and breeding area for birds; few gulls could be expected to nest at the lake because of the great reduction in available nesting habitats of sufficient quality; it is likely that the food supply of the grebes and phalaropes would be significantly reduced.

This level provides a 10-foot buffer above 6,352 feet, the level that would result in the demise of the present lake ecosystem and a cessation in production

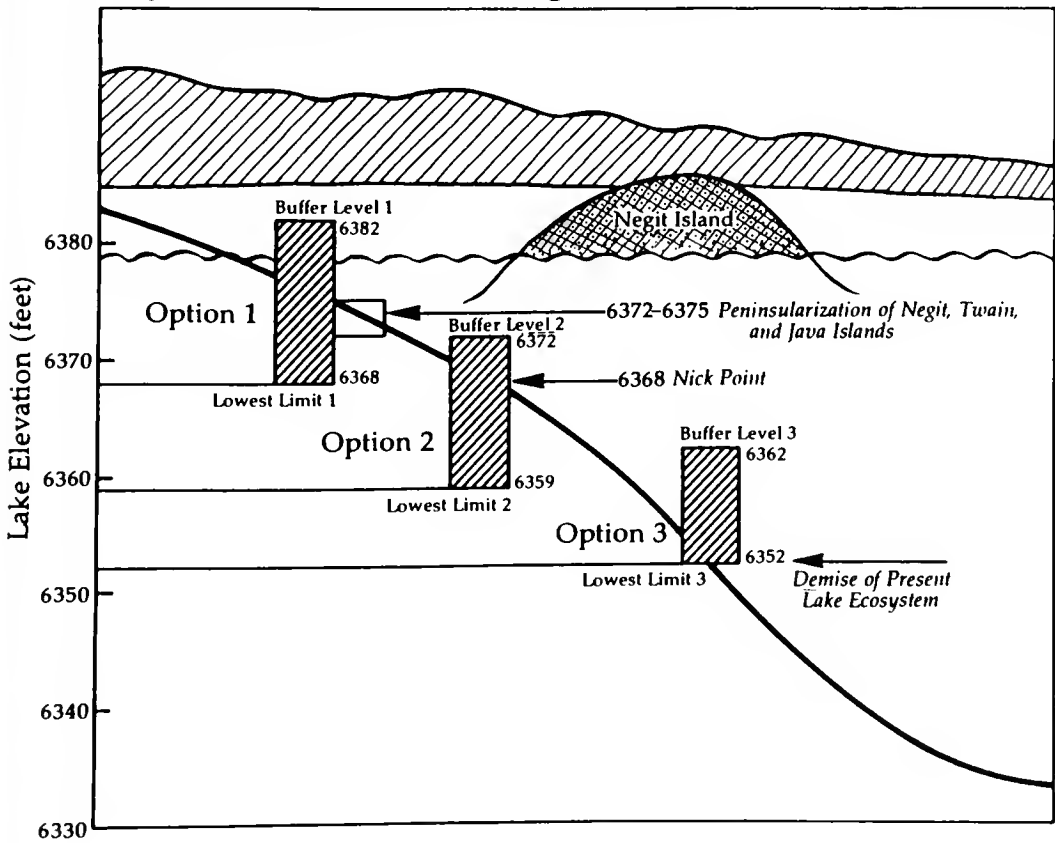
of brine shrimp and brine flies sufficient to support large numbers of birds.

Assuming historic climate and rates of diversion, this level will be reached by the year 2000. To sustain the lake at such a level, LADWP must reduce the amount of water it imports from the basin by about 24 percent.

On the other hand, if modern climatic conditions continue indefinitely and the LADWP continues to exercise its full diversion capability, Mono Lake will continue to decline for the next 100 years, according to the study. During this time the lake would drop another 31 to 48 feet below its present level. At that point, the lake would contain less than half the water it does today. And its salinity would rise to two-and-a-half times its present value.

At the resulting "steady-state" level Mono Lake would be another Dead Sea, a body of water too salty to sup-

Key Lake Levels for Management



port a productive ecosystem. "The loss of the lake as a living ecosystem would be a loss to the people of the State of California, the West and the Nation," says the report.

The study was conducted by a panel of scientists chaired by Daniel B. Botkin, professor of biology and environmental studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Other panel members were: Wallace S. Broecker, Lamont-Doherty Geological Observatory, Columbia University; Lorne G. Everett, Manager, Natural Resources Program, Kaman Tempo, Santa Barbara; Joseph Shapiro, Limnological Research Center, University of Minnesota; and John A. Wiens, professor of ecology, department of biology, Colorado State University.

The panel awarded subcontracts to five researchers to perform scientific analyses on specific aspects of the situation. The subcontractors and the research they performed are listed as follows: Thomas A. Cahill, University of California, Davis (Air Quality at Mono Lake); Joseph R. Jehl Jr., Hubbs Marine Research Institute (Caspian Terns, Phalaropes and Grebes of Mono Lake); John M. Melack, University of California, Santa Barbara (Limnological Conditions at Mono Lake); Scott Stine, Lamont-Doherty Geological Observatory, Columbia University (Geomorphic and Geohydrological Aspects of the Mono Lake Controversy); David W. Winkler, Cornell University (California Gull and Snowy Plover Populations of Mono Lake).

Following the completion of this research, the panel combined the information that resulted with previous scientific knowledge about the lake, interpreted this material and wrote the report that summarizes the situation.

The report is being published by the Water Resources Center at the Univer-

sity of California, Riverside. It is designated WRC#68.

The BACK YARD BIRDER

Before the memory fades, I must discuss the tragedy of the oil spill in the marshes of Martinez. Have you ever stepped on a glob of oil on the beach? What a mess it is to try to remove! Imagine what the animals and birds who inhabit the marshes must cope with in the event of oil invading their homes. They quickly become hopelessly mired, totally unable to function and are doomed to a slow death by starvation, exposure and poison. Even birds with apparently small oil stains loose body heat because the oil creates a gap in the insulation system that maintains a bird's body temperature in cold water. Ingestion of oil also kills. Birds with no oil at all on their plumage have been found dead and examinations revealed that their lung and intestinal tissue was clotted and destroyed by oil.

Oil spill accidents can happen in numerous ways, most often the result of human error. Oil-drilling rigs at sea, storage tanks adjacent to harbors, *all* experience accidents. And then there is the deliberate flushing of tanks and oily bilges by ships at sea. This last form of pollution has supposedly been "limited by international convention, but how can this type of action be policed? How else does "tar" wind up on beaches?

Over the years, methods of cleaning birds victimized by oil spills have been improved. Still, the survival rate is small. First the oil which mats their feathers must be removed with mild detergent. Then the bird's bill must be clasped shut so that it does not ingest any oil remains as it preens. It must be kept warm, well fed and quiet while it recovers. It takes several days before natural body oils necessary for insul-

ation from cold water will coat the affected area.

It is reasonable to assume that it will be many years before the marshes will return to a normal condition. The marshes have been likened to our bodies' livers in that they are a filter system for the bay. Humans die without healthy livers. What will happen to our bay, to our marsh animals and birds? The long-term effects of this spill may never disappear. And what about our oceans? When an oil spill has been blown out to sea, saving our beaches from filth, we sigh with relief. What is happening to our oceans' bottoms as gunk settles there?

Come on, people! This is *our* earth, our **ONLY** earth, our **ONLY** home! Let's get smart and save it for future generations. One person alone doesn't make much noise, but together we can create a mighty roar. Our politicians *should be* speaking for us, but they must be told what we are thinking. If they don't listen, let's find some who will.

—MEG PAULETICH

BALLOONS

A Suprising New Eco-Hazard

(Excerpted from *Earth Island Journal*)

Last August Dr. Mark Oberle was jogging down the sidewalks of Rio de Janeiro's Copacabana when he noticed several forest fires blazing in the surrounding hills. "Some burned for several days", he recalls, "but the city could or would do nothing to stop them." On investigation he discovered an unusual source for these damaging fires. Balloons.

"Festive hot air balloons which *cariocas* build at parties and send aloft with candles to provide the hot air" are not as innocent as they appear. The candles will ignite fires when the

balloons land in the wrong places. Brazil's coastal forests are among the most endangered. Ironically, balloons bearing such good intentions are just one more threat to this international resource.

Balloons threaten more than just forests. Fish, seals and other animals tend to snap up spent latex balloons thinking they are food. Floating off they seem to disappear, but they fall back to earth, often with fatal consequences. More than just an eyesore, balloons have joined plastic bags, six-pack collars and filament nets, known to maim and kill sea mammals, birds and fish all over the world.

Last summer a dying year-old sperm whale washed ashore in New Jersey, a mylar balloon lodged in its stomach and three feet of purple ribbon trailing through its intestines. Last September a half-ton leatherback turtle was found with a latex balloon and ribbon blocking its pyloric valve.

An eleven pound hawksbill turtle on a remote beach in Hawaii had a digestive tract jammed with more than a pound of styrofoam chips, monofilament line, plastic scraps and the neck of a latex balloon. Another victim of the "virtual highways of concentrated floating waste" part of the estimated 50-300 million pounds of buoyant garbage lost or dumped overboard each year by the shipping and fishing industries. Daniel Bauer of the University of Hawaii notes that it is not unusual for 20,000 balloons to be launched at a football half-time show. A "visual feast for human eyes...becomes a lethal feast for fish and marine mammals. Even environmentalists are guilty, as when Greenpeace launches balloons to dramatize the down-wind dangers from radiation and toxic chemicals.

Mylar balloons are hazardous, and caused more than 120 power outages in California last year. Also, helium, the lighter-than-air gas, is limited and irreplaceable. We are wasting helium at a prodigious rate, and according to Isaac Asimov, great quantities will be needed to operate the superconductive supercollider.

Awareness is leading to reconsideration. One science teacher, Marsha Teske, Punahou, Hawaii reports discussing a planned release with her class. "We all agreed that releasing the balloons in the chapel would be just as effective."

For information write the Marine Mammal Stranding Center, P.O. Box 773, Brigantine, NJ 08203.

OFF-ROAD DESTRUCTION

(from the AVOCET, April 1988)

An open letter to Kazutoshi Hagiwara, Vice President, Nissan USA

Dear Sir:

During the recent Olympics I first saw Nissan's advertisement for the Desert Runner four-wheel-drive pickup. The short video showed Nissan's four-wheel-drive pickups in a number of off-road areas, including the eastern Mojave, a fragile desert environment which has been long subjected to off-road-vehicle destruction. I was shocked to witness your company's apparent total disregard for the protection of our desert wildland. I have long believed, and after seeing this advertisement am convinced, that the advertising campaigns of Nissan and other four-wheel-drive manufacturers have promulgated the attitude that driving off-roads is fun, acceptable and manly.

During the last decade the deserts and many other types of California

wildlands have been subjected to an overwhelming assault by four-wheel-drive vehicles, off-road vehicles such as "three-wheelers" and "four-wheelers", and dirt bikes. Most of this destruction occurs on public lands that are not part of the California State Vehicle Recreation Area system, and is caused by individuals who succumb to the "macho" image that has been built up around pickups and "four-wheeling". Although proponents of this form of recreation claim that the destruction is caused by a few misguided individuals, I cannot imagine how such widespread damage to public lands not set aside for this use could have been caused by just a few individuals. I believe, rather, that such damaging behavior is the norm for most "off-roaders", and that Nissan, through its "wholesome" presentation in advertising of off-road driving, must accept a share of responsibility for this destruction.

My wife and I are sorry that for the sake of sales your marketing philosophy must exploit fragile, beautiful and increasingly rare environments. Unfortunately this form of advertising shapes the thoughts and attitudes of the American people, and I would ask you to reflect on the destruction that your vehicles have done to our beautiful country. While you undoubtedly would respond that it is not your vehicles but rather the drivers who are causing the damage, it is your advertising that has promoted and nurtured the desire in these people. Sales figures notwithstanding, Americans, including a number of prominent spokespeople such as Clint Eastwood and Charles Bronson, are speaking out in ever increasing numbers against the destruction of our natural wildlife heritage. I fear for Nissan's sake that other citizens

who seek to preserve and protect America's wildlands will also recognize Nissan's and other off-road vehicle manufacturers' complicity in the destruction of these wildlands, and will respond as we have by eliminating your automobiles from our list of candidates for a small economical commute vehicle.

—Kevin H. C. Monahan

If Mr. Monahan's letter moves you to write, the address is Kazutoshi Hagiwara, Executive Vice President, Operations, Nissan USA, 18455 South Figeroa Street, Carson, CA 90248.

STATE WATER RIGHTS CHALLENGE

The right to remove water from western streams and rivers has been an emotional issue since the settling of the west. (According to Mark Twain, whiskey is for drinking and water is for fighting.) As a result, western states developed a system of water rights law that places the use of water under the control of the states. An important, but by no means paramount, concern of state water law is to protect the beneficial uses (fisheries, wildlife, recreation) of the stream.

In 1920, Congress placed authority to license hydroelectric power plants in the hands of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Since that time hydroelectric developers have generally gained dam operation approval under both federal and state law.

However, in recent years some hydroelectric developers have challenged the authority of a state to issue water rights prescriptions that differ from those issued by FERC. The Commission, which has always argued that

its actions took precedence over state authority, supported that assertion.

As a result in 1987, the State of California brought an action in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals defending the legality of the dual state/federal hydro-electric permitting roles.

Because of the importance of preserving state authority in these matters, Friends of the River, National Audubon, Friends of the Earth, Sierra Club, America Whitewater Affiliation, and the Environmental Policy Institute filed an *amici curiae* brief this spring supporting the State of California.

We are optimistic that California will win. The dam is on Rock Creek (tributary to the south fork of the American River). Like the Sayles Flat Project, the dam developers chose to build the dam after receiving a FERC license but without seeking to obtain a state water right.

NEW IN GGAS' LIBRARY

And a good one for your own: **Paul F. Covel**, author of *People Are for the Birds*, Naturalist emeritus of the Oakland Park System, has written *Beacons Along a Naturalist's Trail*. It is published by Western Interpretive Press and is available at \$10.95 in paperback from the publisher at 2860 Delaware, Oakland, CA 94602, (530-2513). Copies are also available at the GGAS office.

Paul, known to most GGAS chapter members for his long devotion to conservation concerns, is a native of Boston, and was employed by the San Diego Zoo, the US Forest Service, the American Museum of Natural History, and the Oakland Public Museum before being asked to create a park naturalist

program for the city of Oakland. Since retiring in 1975 Covell has taught at a community college, and traveled widely. He is a volunteer in nature education and the environment, is active in GGAS, the Sierra Club, the California Native Plant Society, and is an honorary member of the National Association of Interpretation.

Before getting to content, the book is handsomely produced with design by Dave Comstock, and is generously illustrated with line drawings, maps and photographs.

In the book Paul portrays the lives and contributions of eleven California naturalists. The people he has selected have enriched the lives of many people from their passion for wildlife, habitat, and the natural world. They are interesting people and their lives were filled with their desire to know, and to share their knowledge. Many readers of *The GULL* will have known some of these naturalist-educators, and those who have not had that privilege will treasure meeting them in these pages. The essays are filled with a wealth of personal comment and detail, he is writing about friends, still I found myself wishing that he had written a twelfth essay, an autobiographical one. What better recommendation can one give for a book than that one wants more.

A Guidebook, *Hiking the Big Sur Country—the Ventana Wilderness*, by **Jeffrey P. Schaffer**, issued by Wilderness Press, Berkeley is priced at \$12.95. It is copiously illustrated and includes topographical maps of the whole area in a final section which is very well presented.

It does what a good guide should do, it whets the appetite for exploration of the area, and it presents very practical

suggestions about terrain, problem plants and animals, weather, and for novices, good information about equipment and preparations. Chapter 2 deals with natural history and in sections for varying terrain or habitat it lists the mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians to be found. Good, brief sections on geology and botany for the area are included.

The heart of the book, detailed descriptions of the many trails is professionally done, and of course the area is breath-takingly beautiful.

RIPARIAN SYSTEMS CONFERENCE

September 22–24, 1988, University Extension of UC Davis will present a second “California Riparian Systems Conference”. It will report on issues surrounding the destruction of stream-side lands and on progress made in learning to manage these resources since the first conference in 1981. New concerns for restoration of riparian habitats along disturbed river and creek banks throughout the state will also be discussed.

Both professionals and lay environmentalists are expected and a key objective is to help both groups understand the roles that nature and humans can play in protecting this important part of our environment. For more information call Dana Abell at (916) 752-3098 or write to UC Davis Extension, Davis, CA 95616.

JUNK MAIL

As an individual, your editor is annually irritated by the mailings that begin to come in April for a renewal of membership that is due in October. I have finally given up the struggle. I have renewed in April. An explanation in a NAS mailing to chapter presidents did the trick.

National sends out a programmed series of six reminders with 37% responding to the first one, 13% to the second, 8% to the third, 4% to the fourth, 2% to the fifth, and 1% to the sixth. There is also a telephone reminder from which 2% of the expiring memberships are renewed. If I am correct 73% renew annually. Now that I know I'll stop railing at the pestiferous pleas. So what if I pay six months in advance?

GGAS CENTRAL AMERICAN TRIPS

Steve Howell and Lina Jane Prairie will lead two trips to Central America in 1989 for GGAS. A new tour is being offered that features a week in Yucatan and a week in Tikal, Guatemala Feb. 10-26. The popular tour of Costa Rica's national parks and biological research stations is planned for March 24-April 9.

We will take 10-12 participants maximum. Detailed itineraries are available from the GGAS office. Please give the office (843-2222) or Lina (549-3187, evenings) a call if you are interested.

BIRDS IN CAGES

While, in general, a caged bird is not a sight attractive to Auduboners, there may be some interested in a service of the San Francisco Society for the

Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, an exotic bird care seminar. It is offered free on the second Sunday of each month from noon to 4 p.m. at the SPCA, 2500 16th Street, San Francisco, CA 94103. Call 554-3000 for details.

The instructor is Sally Blanchard, of Alameda (523-5303).

SUMMER OFFERINGS

San Francisco State University's Sierra Field Campus July and August programs are still available. The field station is located one mile above Bassett's station and six miles below Yuba Pass on Hwy. 49 in Sierra Co. at the 35 mile road marker. For information and registration write or phone Jim Steele, Sierra Field Campus, Star Route, Satterley, CA 96124 or (916) 862-1230.

The schedule:

7/25-29 Mammals of the Sierra

7/30-8/7 Nature Study

7/30-8/7 Geocology

8/8-12 Indians of the Sierra

8/13-20 Lakes of the Sierra

FALL BIRDING CLASSES IN SAN FRANCISCO

Evening bird classes again will be offered through the Community Services Program of the San Francisco Community College District. Eight week classes run from Sept. 1, 6, and 7 through Oct. 20, 25, and 26. Seven week classes run from Oct. 27, Nov. 1 and 2 through Dec. 13, 14, and 15, starting in September. Fees are \$40 per seven-week class and \$45 per eight-week class. Pre-registration is highly recommended. For information call the Community Services Office, 776-8247.

All classes will be held in room 222, Marina Middle School, 3500 Filmore (at Bay). Free parking is available in the school lot off Bay St. on the east side of the building.

Each class stresses identification, status and habits of North American birds in two-and-a-half hour weekly slide-lectures. The text for all classes is the *Field Guide to the Birds of North America* by the National Geographic Society. The instructor is **Joe Morlan**, co-author of *Birds of Northern California*, and compiler of the weekly recorded "Northern California Rare Bird Alert", which can be reached by calling 528-0288 or 524-5592 (up-dates).

Ornithology I is an introduction to avian biology. It stresses concepts in modern ornithology, including systematics, evolution, behavior, and population ecology, illustrated by examples from North American bird families, especially common California birds. It meets Tuesdays from 7-9:30 p.m.; part A starts Sept. 6 and part B starts Nov. 1.

Ornithology II is an in-depth systematic study of identification and status of waterbirds including diving ducks, rails, and shorebirds. It meets Wednesdays from 7-9:30 p.m.; part A starts Sept. 7 and part B starts Nov. 2.

Ornithology III will cover landbirds including owls, swifts, hummingbirds, woodpeckers and flycatchers. It meets Thursdays from 7-9:30 p.m.; part A starts Sept. 1 and part B starts Oct. 27.

These classes are recommended by GGAS. Optional field trips may be arranged on weekends. Please bring binoculars and field guides to class if you have them. The text is available at the GGAS office.

BIRD PHOTOGRAPHERS

Bay Area Bird Photographers will have their first meeting of the new year Sept. 7 at the Baylands. The first meeting is traditionally dedicated to an extensive showing of members' slides. To receive a sample copy of their newsletter write to them at 1015 Loma Prieta Ct., Los Altos, CA 94022. Their meetings are always the first Wednesday of the month, with no July or August meeting. Normally notices come too late for inclusion in *The GULL*.

NATURAL EXCURSIONS PRBO Trips

A brochure from PRBO has come in announcing the trips sponsored for 1988-89. These include Antarctica, The Galapagos, Belize. Call 868-1221 for information or a copy of their latest brochure.

GGAS' FIELD LIST

Our publication, *BIRDS OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA—An annotated Field List* is available in a new edition. The basic text is the same, but an index and a supplement have been added. The price is \$6 or by mail \$7.

BOTANICAL GARDEN DOCENTS

The UC Botanical Garden is accepting applications for its '88-'89 docent training. Trainees make a commitment to serve as a docent for at least two years after training. Prospective docents are advised to sign up for a summer course, "Introduction to the Garden", offered July 9-August 13. Inquiries may be made to Stephanie Kaza, 642-3352.

WFO 1988 MEETING

The 1988 Annual Meeting of the Western Field Ornithologists, publishers of *Western Birds*, will be held Thursday through Sunday, Oct. 6-9, in Monterey, California. A Breeding Bird Workshop will be held on Friday, and a Papers Session will be held on Saturday. Field trips will include Elkhorn Slough, Moon Glow

Dairy and Salinas sewer ponds for shorebirds, Carmel River for vagrants, and several pelagic trips during the peak of the seabird migration. A pre-registration discount will be given to participants registering before Sept. 1. For information and registration forms write to Debra Love Shearwater, P.O. Box 1445, Soquel, CA 95073. (408) 688-1990.

GIFTS AND BEQUESTS

FOR GGAS

In Memory of
Marvin Calvert
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Gift of

Anonymous
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The Society welcomes gifts in general or gifts in honor of or in memory of relatives and friends. Such gifts will be used as specified by the donor or, if unspecified, at the discretion of the GGAS Board of Directors. This includes their use for general GGAS activities or for special programs of the Society including Audubon Canyon Ranch of which GGAS is a sponsor. Please send your gift in the form of a check made out to Golden Gate Audubon Society, 1550 Shattuck Ave., #204, Berkeley, CA 94709. All gifts are tax deductible. The Society is also appreciative of any bequests. Such bequests should specify as recipient the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. All gifts, donations and bequests will be acknowledged in *The Gull* as well as personally on behalf of the Society by the Secretary.

— SECOND CLASS MATTER



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Mail for all individuals listed above should be sent to GGAS office.

Send address changes to office promptly; Post office does not forward *THE GULL*. Monthly meetings: second Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Joint membership — local and national \$30 per year (individual); \$38 (family); includes *AUDUBON* Magazine and *THE GULL*; to join, make checks payable to National Audubon Society and send to GGAS office to avoid delay in receiving *THE GULL*. Membership renewals should be sent directly to the National Audubon office. Subscriptions to *THE GULL* separately \$8 per year; single issues \$1. High school and college student membership \$18 per year. Senior citizen individual \$21, senior citizen family \$23. Associate Membership in Golden Gate Audubon Society, \$10 per year.

The Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. was established January 25, 1917,
and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948.

The *Gull* deadline is the first of the month for the following month, and July 15th for September issue.